

A Quitline for Teen Smokers

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Data on service utilization indicate that telephone quitlines can be a good way of reaching teen smokers. This presentation will examine a telephone counseling protocol for teen smokers and will address the issues of reach and efficacy. A total of 1,435 smokers aged 14-19 years who called the California Smokers' Helpline were randomized (by two age strata, <18 or not) into self-help or telephone counseling groups. The counseling program consisted of one pre-quit session and up to 6 followup sessions. All smokers were followed for 13 months. The results show that most teenagers in the program made a quit attempt at a rate slightly higher than that of adult smokers calling the quitline. The counseling significantly increased the prolonged abstinence rate up to 6 months. By 12 months, however, the difference between counseling and self-help groups reached only a marginal significance level. Further analyses showed that counseling effects were less likely to be sustained over time among the younger teens than among the older ones. The implication of these results for future interventions with teen smokers will be discussed.